

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge

Comprehensive Conservation Planning Issues Workbook

Draft Refuge Vision Statement

In an ever expanding area of development, Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge encompasses some of the most pristinely conserved habitats in coastal New England. Bald eagles and ospreys feed along miles of undisturbed shoreline, waterfowl swarm salt and freshwater marshes, dense woodlands provide food and cover for forest-interior songbirds, and open fields provide a singing ground for grassland birds and American woodcock. The bay supports the largest concentration of wintering black ducks and bald eagles in New Hampshire.

In the coming years the refuge will continue to be a cornerstone of resource protection in the Great Bay ecosystem through the preservation of biodiversity, enhanced water quality, and protection of threatened and endangered species including upland sandpiper and New England cottontail. The Concord pine barrens division of the refuge continues to sustain the endangered Karner blue butterfly and other rare species. The local community will understand the importance of Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge as a resource for wildlife and people, and will take pride in this natural haven in their backyard. The refuge will provide the public with a variety of wildlife recreational opportunities, while partnering with others in promoting our wildlife first mission.

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge will serve as an example for resource protection and wildlife conservation in the Great Bay ecosystem, coastal New Hampshire, and New England, and will be a treasured haven for wildlife and people by this and future generations of Americans.



Sunset on Great Bay.

USFWS

A Conservation Plan for the Future

The CCP process provides an opportunity for States, conservation and local organizations, communities, and concerned citizens to participate in the development of a 15-year master plan for a refuge. Parker River refuge staff are leading the effort, with assistance from the Service's Northeast Regional Office, other Service experts, as well as representatives from New Hampshire Fish and Game.

How Can I Get Involved?

The following Issues Workbook is one way to let the refuge hear your ideas. Please take the time to complete this workbook and return it to us with your contact information. The workbook asks a series of questions with room for comment regarding the refuge, surrounding Great Bay watershed, and management priorities. Your comments help us evaluate current management, envision future desired conditions on the refuge, plan the future of our public use programs, and identify other important issues. We have also drafted a refuge vision statement which we would like comments on. To stay informed, complete the mailing information on the back of this workbook.

In addition, the refuge is planning a series of hosted Open Houses this summer. We hope you can attend an Open House in your community. Locations, dates, and times for Open Houses are enclosed and will also be announced in local newspapers. We will also provide other forums to facilitate public participation. Below is a list of options we intend to use. We would be interested to know if you have other ideas you would like us to consider.

- Contact us at any time
- Hold open houses (see next page)
- Distribute a community survey
- Develop informational newsletters
- Write feature articles
- Participate in civic and professional group events
- Give presentations at town and community leadership meetings
- Hold working group sessions and technical expert meetings
- Continue partnerships



View of Stubbs Pond.

Let's Get Started

Participation by you and other interested individuals and groups is critical to the success of this planning process. This will help us consider your interests as we develop the Comprehensive Conservation Plan.

At this early stage in the planning process we are seeking your input via public meetings and this Issues Workbook. Our intent is to hear directly from folks like you - to learn how you feel about the refuge, any issues or concerns you might have, as well as your ideas for getting things done.

The following workbook will be available at the public meetings, and will be shared with refuge visitors, neighbors, and partners who may not be able to attend the meetings. We have compiled a list of questions to provide a basis for comparing your comments with others we receive.

Please answer the following questions. Feel free to add additional comments in the space provided. Give us a call, email or write us at the address below.

The comments we receive will help us identify issues and develop goals and objectives.

Questions on Your Refuge Experience

1. How many days do you visit the refuge each year? _____ days per year

2. What activities have you participated in while visiting the refuge? Please check all that apply.

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird Watching | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature/Wildlife Viewing | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Bicycling | <input type="checkbox"/> Guided Interpretive tours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiking/Nature Trails | <input type="checkbox"/> Photography | <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hunting | <input type="checkbox"/> Cross County Skiing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

Which activity is most important to you? _____

What areas of the refuge do you usually visit?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peverly Pond Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Karner Blue Butterfly easement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ferry Way Trail | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ |

3. Have you participated in any refuge-sponsored events or activities? If so, please check all that apply.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trail hikes | <input type="checkbox"/> Annual shoreline clean-up | <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and wildlife clinic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bird walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Snowshoe walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Walks and presentations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

4. What do you value most about Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge?

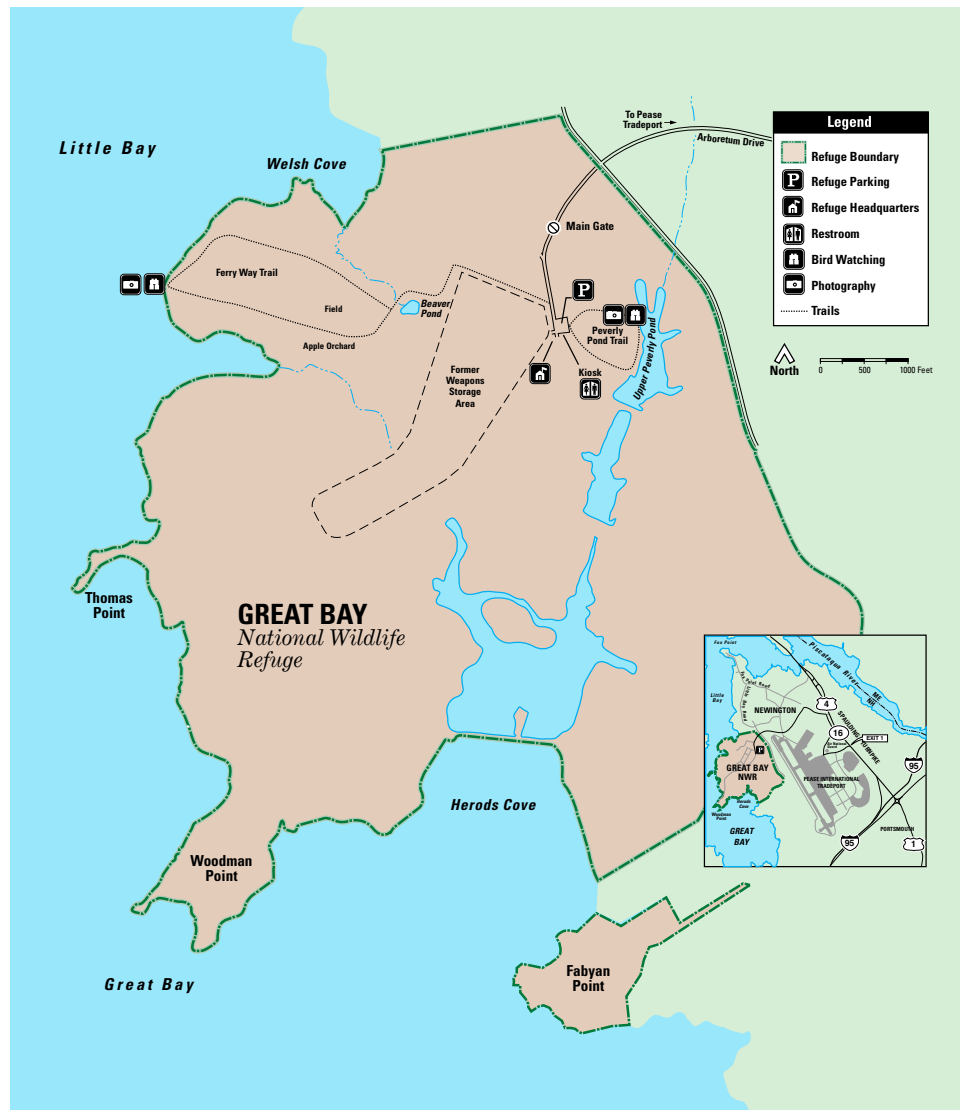
What do you value most about the Great Bay watershed?

Refuge Overview

Established in 1992, Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge is located along the eastern shore of New Hampshire's Great Bay in the town of Newington. The refuge protects more than 1,000 acres along the seacoast for migratory birds and other wildlife. It is one of the longest stretches of undeveloped shoreline along the bay, and consists of mud flats, salt and freshwater marshes, swamps, ponds, streams, woodlands and fields. These diverse habitats support many plants and animals native to the area, including New Hampshire's greatest concentration of wintering bald eagles, and several state-listed rare and endangered species.

Great Bay refuge also manages a 28-acre conservation easement in Concord, New Hampshire. The easement was established to protect the federally endangered Karner Blue Butterfly and its pine barren habitat.

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the Karner Blue Butterfly easement are administered by Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Newburyport, Massachusetts. Contact Parker River NWR for more information.



Great Bay NWR trails and facilities map.

5. What do you consider to be the most important problem facing Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge?

What do you consider to be the most important problem facing the Great Bay watershed?

Questions on Natural Resources Conservation

The Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge provides a wide diversity of habitat for migratory birds, resident fish and wildlife and state-listed threatened and endangered species. The Great Bay estuary provides unique habitat in New Hampshire for a number of rare plants and animal species. This plan will emphasize the need to conserve, protect, and enhance these habitats and the species dependent on them.

6. In your opinion, which species or habitats should be a management priority?

S. Maslowski/USFWS



Bobolink

7. In your opinion, should the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service engage in protecting wildlife habitats outside of the existing approved refuge acquisition boundary?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. If so, which options should the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pursue in protecting wildlife habitats outside of the refuge acquisition boundary? Please check up to 3 choices.

- ☐ land acquisition from willing sellers at market value
- ☐ conservation easements; e.g. purchasing development rights
- ☐ support partner efforts to conserve land
- ☐ environmental education
- ☐ habitat restoration partnerships with private landowners
- ☐ no active involvement
- ☐ other (please specify)

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Historic Margeson-Loomis Estate on refuge

USFWS



American Black Duck

Comments?

9. Are any of the following natural resource issues a concern to you in the Great Bay watershed? If so, please rank your top three choices. 1=highest concern and 3=lowest concern of your three choices.

- _____ the development and fragmentation of habitats
- _____ invasion of exotic plant and animal species
- _____ increased use in sensitive habitat areas
- _____ degradation of water quality
- _____ lack of active management to improve wildlife habitats
- _____ habitat restoration
- _____ other issues (please specify)



J. Esberg/USFWS

Headquarters sign

10. If possible, please provide additional details on why you selected the above. In particular, we would be interested to know specific locations of concern.



S. Hillebrand/USFWS

Bald Eagle

Questions on Recreation and Public Access

The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 identifies six priorities for wildlife-dependent public use on national wildlife refuges: environmental education, interpretation, fishing, hunting, wildlife observation and photography.

Public uses are permitted when they are “compatible” with the purpose(s) for which a refuge was established. In determining compatibility the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) considers:

- anticipated impacts to natural resources;
- safety; and,
- budget and staffing

The Service maintains two trails on the Refuge which are open for pedestrian use from dawn until dusk year-round. White-tailed deer hunting is permitted on refuge property the first weekend of the New Hampshire any deer firearm season. Volunteers help with refuge maintenance, habitat management, and environmental interpretation. This planning process will evaluate these and other opportunities for priority public use on the refuge.

11. Do our recreational facilities meet your needs?

Please Circle Only One									
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Very Well	Excellent		Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
1	2	3	4	5	Hiking/walking trails for wildlife viewing opportunities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Outdoor education activities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Access for people with disabilities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Visitor information/orientation center	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Deer hunting opportunities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Small game hunting opportunities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Upland gamebird hunting opportunities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Waterfowl hunting opportunities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Fishing opportunities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Kiosks or signs with information about the refuge or its wildlife	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Viewing areas with information about different wildlife habitats	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Directional signs for refuge	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Access for canoes and kayaks	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Educational information on historical sites	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Guided bird walks, lectures, presentations	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Website with information about the refuge and its activities	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Opportunity to interact with refuge staff	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Horseback trails	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Bicycle trails	A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4	5	Other services (please specify) _____	A	B	C	D

12. We are interested in the ways community residents engage in local or regional natural resource or environmental issues. Please indicate which of the activities you have participated in within the last 5 years.

Participation	Yes	No
1. Attending a public hearing or meeting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Contacting or writing a state/federal agency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Contacting or writing a U.S. senator, member of congress, or state legislator	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Joining a interest group (such as an environmental, sportsman's, animal rights, agriculture, or resource use organization)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. If YES, Please list organization (s) _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Leading an interest group (such as an environmental, sportsman's, animal rights, agriculture, or resource use organization)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

13. Are there activities or services that you think should be allowed at Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge that currently are not allowed?

☐ No ☐ Yes (If yes, please list these activities)



D. Menke/USFWS

Cedar Waxwing

14. Are there activities or services that you think should not be allowed at Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge that currently are allowed?

☐ No ☐ Yes (If yes, please list these activities)

15. Please include here any additional comments on recreation, education, and public access.



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Refuge and Service staff overlooking the bay

16. Please include here any additional comments on conserving fish and wildlife habitat.

17. Where did you obtain this workbook? Your answer will help us determine the most effective places to distribute these in the future.

Mail issues workbooks to:

Mao Teng Lin
 Assistant Refuge Planner
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 300 Westgate Center Drive
 Hadley, MA 01035

Workbooks may also be mailed
 to or dropped-off at the Parker
 River NWR office.

**For additional information,
 contact the refuge:**

Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge
 c/o Parker River NWR
 6 Plum Island Turnpike
 Newburyport, MA 01950
 978/465 5753
 fw5rw_prnwr@fws.gov

[http://www.fws.gov/
 northeast/greatbay/](http://www.fws.gov/northeast/greatbay/)

That's it!

Thank you for your time.

Now that you are done, please mail the entire workbook back to us by July 17, 2009. We will summarize these public comments and those received at the public meeting in our next newsletter. Please help us keep our mailing list updated by completing the following.

If you wish to receive future "Planning Updates" about the Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge comprehensive conservation plan, please fill in the appropriate information below and return it with the Issues Workbook.

_____ (Yes) Keep me on your mailing list/add me to your mailing list

_____ (No) Take me off your mailing list.

Name: _____
 (Please Print)

Address: _____

City: _____

State _____ Zip Code: _____

If you are acting in an official capacity as the representative of an organization please complete the following two items.

Organization: _____

Title: _____

Please note that names on the CCP mailing list become part of the public record for this project. The Service must release names only, if requested, under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act of 1974. To retain you on our mailing list we need your permission. Please sign below.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

M. Lin/USFWS



Painted Turtles

**Federal Relay Service for the
 deaf or hard of hearing:**

1 800/877 8339

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
<http://www.fws.gov>

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